

ISSN  
1820-9831  
(ONLINE)

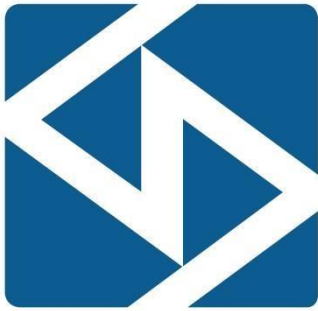
ELTA  
**NEWSLETTER**

VOL. 10  
NO. 4

JULY-AUGUST 2016



[WWW.ELTA.ORG.RS](http://WWW.ELTA.ORG.RS)



# ELTA Newsletter

ISSN 1820-9831 (Online)

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ELTA Newsletter is published bi-monthly.

Dear colleagues,

We hope that you had a wonderful school year and that you enjoy your summer holiday now. We have prepared our summer issue so you can relax and read some interesting articles.

In the sections **Upcoming events** you can inform yourselves about some events which will take place in the following months.

In the section **ELT Flash**, **Katarina Ristanović** describes an event at the Grammar School in Gornji Milanovac which was a part of SOL's seminars through Serbia. In the second article, **Božica Šarić-Cvjetković** gives us her impressions about the 17 th International INGED ELT Conference in Turkey. The third article describes the experience of one teacher, **Nataša Božić Grojić** who attended the IH Certificate in Online Tutoring awarded by IH and ELTA. Finally, **Sanja Tasic** reports on Mark Andrew's workshop in Nis.

In this issue, you can find an Interview with **Kieran Donaghy**, for the **A Day in the Life of** section, where he discusses the role of films in ELT.

The students have been very diligent this time and as a consequence there are 4 articles at **Students' Corner**. Read the creative stories and a poem written by the students from Užice Grammar School. One student shared her experience of her visit to the USA.

And, of course, in the **Creative Corner**, we have, especially for you, our readers, the second chapter of **Ken Wilson's** novel! In the last issue, we published Chapter 1 of Ken Wilson's novel-in-progress, The Duke's Portrait. Ken promised that he would let us have Chapter 2 in time for this issue, and he did. He also said he had re-written Chapter 1, so we're publishing both chapters together. Ken has promised that he won't make any more changes to the first two chapters, and he will send Chapter 3 in time for the next issue.

On behalf of ELTA Team we wish you pleasant, stress-free and enjoyable summer holidays.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- [Conferences](#)
- [Students' camps](#)
- [Teachers' camps](#)
- [Webinars](#)

## CONFERENCES

*\* Call for papers still open for some of the conferences, check it out*

### ✓ **25th IATEFL Poland Conference**

Date: 16-18 September 2016

Place: West Pomeranian University of Technology, Szczecin

*For more, follow the link: [IATEFL Poland](#)*

### ✓ **2nd Annual International SKA ELT Conference, Mind the Gap**

Date: 23-24 September, 2016.

Place: Košice, Slovakia

*For more, follow the link: [SKA Conference 2016](#)*

### ✓ **Image Conference and 5<sup>th</sup> ELT Malta Conference**

Date: 6 - 8 October 2016.

Place: to be announced

*For more, follow the link: [Image Conference & 5th ELT Malta Conference](#)*

✓ **26th International IATEFL Hungary 3D Conference Dimensions, Diversity and Directions in ELT**

Date: 7-8 October 2016

Place: University of Kaposvár, Hungary

For more, follow the link: [IATEFL Hungary](#)

✓ **51<sup>st</sup> IATEFL Conference 2017**

Date: 4-7th April 2017 (PCEs 3rd April)

Place: Glasgow

For more, follow the link: [51st IATEFL Conference 2017](#)

\* **Take a look at current list of scholarships for the 51<sup>st</sup> IATEFL Conference. The deadline for applications is Thursday 21st July 2016.**

[Current List of Scholarships](#)

## SUMMER CAMPS

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✓ **SOuL Camps for Teachers**

Dates: 11th – 18th August 2016

Places: Eco-Center “Radulovački”, Sremski Karlovci, Serbia

For more, follow the link: [SOuL Camps](#)

✓ **SOL Programmes for Teachers in Devon**

Date: Summer 2016

Place: Devon, UK

For more, follow the link: [SOL Programmes](#)

✓ **SOL Programmes for Students**

Date: Summer 2016

Place: Devon, UK

For more, follow the link: [SOL Programmes](#)

## WEBINARS

✓ **Macmillan webinars**

[Macmillan webinars](#)

✓ **OUP webinars**

[OUP webinars](#)

✓ **SEETA Webinars**

[SEETA Webinars](#)

✓ **NILE Webinars**

[nile-elt](#)

# Workshops with SO(U)L, Mark Andrews in Gornji Milanovac

By Katarina Ristanović, Grammar school in Gornji Milanovac

**Keywords:** SOL, ELTA, language, culture

It was a great privilege for the students and teachers of the Grammar school in Gornji Milanovac to welcome Mark Andrews who is well known in the ELT world. Having given an inspiring talk at the 14<sup>th</sup> ELTA conference which was held in Belgrade from 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> May 2016 where he focused on the role of the teachers as educators, Mark went on to put his story into practice by going on a tour. His plan was to visit small towns in Serbia and do workshops with students and teachers.

The first stop on his way to the southern Serbia was a town of Gornji Milanovac. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> May, about 30 students welcomed our visitor from Great Britain in a language classroom. There were so many questions they wanted to ask. After a slow start, there was a discussion about football, English and Serbian food, Shakespeare, national symbols and, of course, the prejudices students have about British culture and people. A great way to break down these is to visit the country which they have learnt about only through the English language, so there might be some students from Gornji Milanovac attending SOL courses in Devon next year.

On the next day, Mark visited our school again, this time, to do a workshop for the English teachers from Gornji Milanovac and nearby places. It was entitled "Teaching English with linguistic, cultural and pedagogical aims and helping our students to think a bit more about the language they are learning and the world they live in." The teachers were encouraged to consider how to engage their students in the process of learning and, what is more, how to help them become global citizens who appreciate their own culture and can communicate it to the world.

During his stay in Gornji Milanovac, our guest had an opportunity to visit the house of the Yugoslav-Norwegian friendship built about 1980. The building in the shape of the Viking boat overlooks the town and is the symbol of the suffering of our people in concentration camps in Norway in WWII and the help they got from the Norwegian people to escape from these camps. Mark was obviously impressed by this symbol of the town and the exhibits in the museum which, unfortunately, are not preserved in the way they should be. Here is yet another idea to engage our students in a project they would be proud of, our visitor suggested.

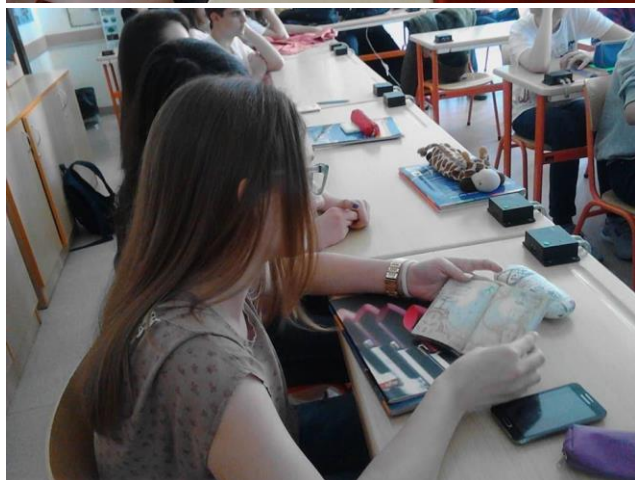
All in all, the visit of this great teacher, trainer and educator meant a lot to the school, its students, and teachers. We are looking forward to welcoming him again at any time in the future and are hoping to experience Devon next summer.

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**Katarina Ristanović** graduated from the Faculty of Philology, Belgrade, in 2000 and has been working in Grammar school "*Takovski ustanak*", Gornji Milanovac ever since. As SITT trainer, she was involved in "*Towards Better Understanding*" project as a teacher trainer and project

manager. From 2010 to 2015 she was a member of ELTA Board and ELTA International Coordinator. Her interests include teacher development and CLIL.

\*I certify I have the right to publish the photos







## The 17<sup>th</sup> International INGED ELT Conference

By Božica Šarić-Cvjetković, Primary school Triva Vitasović Lebarnik Laćarak, Serbia

Keywords: INGED, Conference, workshop, students

Even though it's been several months since I went to Ankara as ELTA Serbia representative to participate at 17<sup>th</sup> INGED conference, the memories are still fresh and vivid.

The Conference took place at the premises of the Prep School of Cankaya University, Ankara, between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> October 2015. The conference was organized by INGED, an international organization with a mission to strengthen the effective teaching and learning of English as a foreign language in Turkey while developing international connections.

The theme of the conference was "Rise and Shine" with a belief that by exchanging knowledge, experiences and practices English language teachers can be provided with the inspiration they need to continue creating miracles in the classrooms. And they were.



The first day started with a plenary session *Learner Autonomy...How far have we come (really, really)?* by Tony Gurr. Learner autonomy has been researched and discussed for many years. When the teachers talk about what kind of students they wish to have in their classrooms, autonomous, independent and responsible are the words they put on the top of the list. But is it reality? Do the most of the schools produce independent, autonomous learners or teachers still struggle to find ways to increase learner autonomy in their students? In his plenary session, Tony presented what we have learned from the research and what challenges teachers still face.

The plenary session was followed by a slot of paper presentations and another slot of workshops. One of the workshops was Muzeyyen Nazli Gungor's *It's Child's Play* in which she

introduced a variety of communicative games for young and very young learners which can help them develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. These games include problem solving, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration. The conference continued with a plenary workshop, a follow-up session by Tony Gurr. He shared models which teachers might be able to use in their own classrooms. The session also allowed participants to share ideas and tips for promoting learner autonomy through everyday classroom activities.

Four slots of paper sessions which followed the plenary workshop had a range of topics, from exploring students' misbehavior and blended learning to assessing writing and metacognitive strategies.

The first day of the conference ended with a cocktail party, hosted by Cankaya University.

The second day started with Professor Birsen Tutunis' plenary session *New & Old Trends in English Language Teaching* in which she looked into changes English language teaching has gone through over the years. She argued if the new trends were really new or they were rediscoveries of old methods neglected over a time?

The next thirty minute slot was a combination of paper sessions and poster presentations. Posters were displayed in the hall of the university building and each of the five presenters were presenting simultaneously. Delegates could choose on the spot which presentation to follow. Some of the topics were *Teaching Grammar through Sherlock Holmes Story*, *Teaching Games through Natural Intelligence* and *A Sample Storytelling Lesson Based on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills*.

This was followed by a sixty minute slot of workshops, where I presented my findings on teaching children with ADHD. After a brief introduction in which I introduced what ADHD is, what the symptoms and causes are, the participants were engaged in sharing their experiences. They also watched an ADHD simulator which helped them put themselves into the shoes of some of their students and did a small memory task. The workshop ended with practical advice about teaching and learning strategies and classroom management. As the workshop was followed by the lunch break, many of the participants stayed after the workshop to ask additional questions or share their view on the topic.

The afternoon sessions started with another slot of paper sessions. I went to see a practical talk full of tips and tricks for helping students cope with dyslexia, *Literacy Development Strategies for Dyslexic Language Learners* by Anna Petala. Next, there was a plenary workshop *Reading Activities for Raising Awareness for Autonomous Learning* by Professor Birsen Tutunis and SEETA Annual General Meeting, organized only for SEETA delegates.

The day ended with a conference dinner downtown with great food, music and even better company of colleagues from Turkey, Greece, Albania and UK.

The last day of the conference started with a plenary session *Baby Steps* by Christopher Sheen. He presented some practical ways to look at language scaffolding lesson to lesson and how to help students achieve goals. This was followed by a plenary workshop *Teaching English to Young Learners* by Aydan Ersoz. The workshop included tips for the use of songs and puppets in the classroom.



After the plenary workshop delegates had a chance to see several commercial presentations. The most interesting was Anne Margaret Smith's *English Sounds Fun*. After she introduced the topic of teaching children with dyslexia, she presented teaching materials which can help students and teachers overcome difficulties in learning and teaching.



Last session of the last day of the conference was a set of round table discussions. The topics were: Young Learners & Teenagers, Curriculum & Materials, Testing & Assessment, Teacher Education & Development and ICT.



I participated in Teacher Education & Development round table discussion where I had a chance to share ideas and experience with Suzan Oniz, Bena Gul Peker and Christopher Sheen.



The conference ended with the raffle and closing remarks by the organizing committee.

I'd like to thank ELTA Serbia for sending me as a representative. I'd also like to thank the organizing committee and all the colleagues from INGED for all the effort they made to organize such a successful event and for making me feel welcome.

\*I certify that I have the right to publish the photos.

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Božica Šarić-Cvjetković has a BA in English language and literature and ten years of experience in the classroom. She teaches young learners and teenagers in a state primary school and works with students with special learning difficulties. She's also a teacher trainer and has presented at several international conferences.

# IH Certificate in Online Tutoring

By Nataša Božić Grojić, Kolarac Foundation, Belgrade

Keywords: scholarship, International house, ELTA, online tutoring

Thanks to a scholarship given by International House and made available by ELTA Serbia, I am now a proud owner of the prestigious IH Certificate in Online Tutoring. The five-week course which we simply called [COLT](#), contained four modules and led its participants through a series of practical tasks which provided better understanding of what online tutoring involves. Our tutors were Ania Rolinska and Emma Cresswell.

COLT was not my first online course. Before COLT I took multiple EVO sessions and SEETA courses and also finished Building Teaching Skills through the Interactive Web, offered by the University of Oregon. What I am trying to say is that I knew what online learning was like even before I started this course. What I had never thought about before COLT was what online teaching was really like. Even though I had been a moderator, I had never run a course of my own.

I am still inexperienced in online teaching, but this course has given me great insights into what it involves. I have learnt a few things about creating questionnaires, closing discussions and giving instructions. I have created my own mini-lesson and taught my own synchronous class. Now I know what the challenges are and I believe I am beginning to get some insights into what I should work on in order to become a real online tutor. I have started to grasp the difference between online and face-to-face teaching. I have even thought about the teaching skills I already possess and how those could transfer to an online environment.

Module 1 was all about setting the climate and getting to know each other and the website (the course was run on the Moodle platform). We also reflected on the advantages and disadvantages of following patterns in a book and in a course. We were still looking at things from the learners' point of view, but we were also reflecting on the way the course was organized and set up.

Apart from the assignments we completed individually, there were quite a few assignments which involved group work and required us to work as a team in order to complete them. The rationale behind this is that being responsible for the success of your team increases participation. Considering that dropout rates are a huge problem in online courses (especially in MOOCs), building a strong group spirit from the beginning is a good idea. Another thing that is very important is introducing the participants to the platform and helping them find their way around it before they start working on other course tasks.

In Module 2, we were slowly encouraged to start thinking like online tutors. We looked at several VLEs and reflected on their complexity, and we looked at what made IH COLT a complex course. We were presented with a case study and encouraged to think of solutions to an online learner's problem. We created a learning styles questionnaire and wrote a message of enticement. The purpose of a message of enticement is to pull in reluctant participants before they drop out completely. I was given an additional challenge this week – I was a group leader. This was a very valuable learning experience. However, the most challenging task this week was creating a questionnaire. This is something I will still need to work on, especially in relation to who my course participants could be (rather than who I think they are). What I really learnt in Module 2 is that in online tutoring we are dealing with a

number of unknown variables when it comes to our participants (who they are, what motivates them and what challenges they might be facing). We don't see their body language, so we have to resort to other means in order to help them (questionnaires, emails and synchronous meetings, to name a few).

In Module 3 we started working on practical online tutoring tasks. We looked at some synchronous tools and I had a really good experience with Google Hangouts, which I believe I will keep using in the future. We looked at some scenarios and possible solutions and attempted a discussion weave or a summary. A discussion weave is what tutors might do if they want to encourage further discussion and it involves highlighting key ideas mentioned by various participants and then asking a discussion question. A summary is similar, except that its purpose is to close a discussion. In this module we also adapted a face-to-face activity so that it could be done online. This was the task I enjoyed the most in Module 3, because I ended up with a lesson idea which I could use both in the classroom and online. The skill I will need to work on is weaving. It is not easy and it is very important, since it is the online equivalent to leading a face-to-face discussion. If I had to pick a common "theme" in this module, I would say that it is the way our face-to-face teaching skills can transfer to an online setting.

In Module 4 we were fully in our tutor roles. We created a lesson in our Moodle Sandbox and taught a synchronous class. We came up with our own online course idea and reflected further on the differences between online and face-to-face teaching. Module 4 was very challenging and there were times when I thought I wouldn't make it. Probably the hardest part was coming up with a lesson idea. After that things became easier, though creating tasks in the Moodle Sandbox was more difficult than I had thought. I had never been a teacher in Moodle before, only a course participant, so I was new to Moodle editing (one of the unexpected bonuses of the course was learning how to teach on the Moodle platform). I was quite happy with the way the activities turned out, though I had to rethink my instructions. Instructions are probably even more important in an online setting, because you can't demonstrate or correct immediately. The synchronous task was another reason for panic, but I completed it (relatively) successfully, thanks to my two coworkers who agreed to be my students in this class. While I was in the Google Hangout teaching my class, I had a sense of joy that I often have in my face-to-face classes. I felt that I was doing something that I was meant to do. I am still a beginner and I need to practice teaching synchronously, but I will get there eventually.

The task that gave me even more joy was coming up with an idea for an online course. At some point, while I was writing the proposal, this stopped being an academic exercise and became something real and important. It became a real course that I was willing to work on and put online at some point in the future. In the meantime, I have discussed this with my director and she has given me the green light. In the weeks and months to come I will be working on the details and I hope to see this course online some time in 2017.

COLT has been incredibly useful. It is a very well-designed course, with meaningful and well-scaffolded tasks. It is challenging, but worth every minute of the time. Once again, I am very grateful to ELTA Serbia and to International House for giving me this learning opportunity.

Finally, I wouldn't have been able to succeed without my wonderful tutors, Ania Rolinska and Emma Cresswell. They were great role models for what online tutors should do. They provided constructive feedback and supported us every step of the way.



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Natasa Bozic Grojic is a teacher of English from Belgrade, Serbia. She teaches adults and she has been in this job for 20 years. She first got interested in Web 2.0 and blogging in January 2008 when she attended two EVO sessions - Becoming a Webhead and Blogging4Educators. She is particularly interested in student motivation and classroom dynamics.

# **A Festival of Ideas on Including Culture in Our Classrooms**

**By Sanja Tasic, Primary School 'Jovan Arandjelovic', Crvena Reka and  
'Ljupce Spanac', Bela Palanka  
A Report on Mark Andrews' workshop in Nis**

**Keywords:** workshop, culture, report, activities

In May 2016, ELTA Serbia organized workshops in a few towns in Serbia, held by Mark Andrews, a teacher-trainer at "SOL"- England. His workshop in Nis was scheduled for May 28<sup>th</sup>, and it was one of those events that participants remember as both informative and fun. As teachers were arriving and taking their seats, I was amazed by how Mark easily remembered their names, a skill I would like to have when meeting my students for the first time. I don't know what the secret is, but it obviously built a good trainer-trainee relationship, and the atmosphere was friendly and relaxed from the start.

The workshop started with a slide with a few photos and a year. The teachers were supposed to make up a story out of it, and then Mark told us what had actually happened. This is such an easily-prepared activity, but the one that involves the students, as there is an element of mystery in it and the task can be given by students themselves so that they can get to know one another better.

The next was the image of the coat-of-arms of the city of Nis, with simple questions: what's in it, and why it is there. This is also a good speaking activity as it triggers conversation, but also gives the students a broader knowledge of their culture. This is something Mark insists on. Yes, we should introduce our students to the English culture, but we should also help them know their own culture better, and be able to talk about it in English. *"Students should be given a demonstration of the culture, civilisation and unique values of the target country (countries), and by comparing these to their own culture, develop a more complex notion of Serbian culture."*

Mark also showed some pictures of bits of Serbian culture in Hungary where he lives, and in England, which is also a great topic of conversation. That is something that is missing in coursebooks, and we as teachers should provide our students with such materials. We have to be aware that it is not only language that we teach, but much more than that. The topic itself which is used to present a certain grammatical point is important as well, and very much worth teaching/learning. *"If we make sure that all content is worth learning - that is, that we use topics*

*and themes that are significant - we can enrich our teaching enormously - and make language learning more effective.”*

What came next was the UK flag which consists of the red cross of Saint George (patron saint of England), edged in white, the Cross of St Patrick (patron saint of Ireland), and the saltire of Saint Andrew (patron saint of Scotland). However, St Patrick wasn't Irish, St Andrew wasn't Scottish and St George wasn't English, which is another thought-provoking fact.

This is just a glimpse of what the participants of Mark's workshop were part of, and we certainly hope we will be lucky to host him in the future again. Here are some comments made by the participants:

“The navigation through the two cultures and heritage was truly impressive. The focus on the intercultural dialogue was an excellent reminder that so much more is going on in our classes than just teaching the language. I am sure we will 'spread' what we have learnt.” (Ljubica Miladinović)

“I enjoyed the workshop very much not only because of a handful of great classroom ideas but also because of Mark's fantastic energy and enthusiasm. Mark, you reminded us how important it is to bring the culture themes into our classrooms, and I thank you for that. I'm going to use the British flag idea for sure.” (Aleksandra Nikolić)

“I'd like to thank you for the practical tips that can be easily implemented in almost any classroom. I even plan to start "the word of the day" and "guess whose birthday it is today" with my 5th graders on Tuesday! We certainly plan to continue sharing/teaching other classrooms around the world about Serbia and our culture and practice English at the same time.” (Ana Žiković)

In Marks' words, it is “always fun to explore British Cultural Studies in Central and Eastern Europe in a personalised way and to find ways of integrating language and culture in ways which get students to think about the world a bit more with linguistic, cultural and pedagogical aims which might lead to students caring about the world a bit more and making it a better place for all of us, while learning some English at the same time.”

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**Sanja Tasic** has been an EFL teacher for twelve years and a teacher trainer for two. She graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy, English Department at the University of Nis, Serbia. She works at Primary Schools 'Jovan Arandjelovic', Crvena Reka and 'Ljupce Spanac', Bela Palanka. She is particularly interested in teaching young learners and applying ICT in class.

## Interview with Kieran Donaghy

By Vicky Papageorgiou, English instructor, Metropolitan College,  
Thessaloniki, Greece



Kieran Donaghy is an award-winning writer, teacher and trainer with a special interest in the use of film in education. His website on the use of film in language teaching *Film English* <http://film-english.com/> has won a British Council ELTons Award for Innovation in Teacher Resources, the most prestigious European media in education prize the MEDEA Award for User-Generated Media, and an English Speaking Union Award. He is the author of the methodology book on the use of film in language teaching *Film in Action* (DELTA Publishing). You can find out more about Kieran and his work at his website <http://kierandonaghy.com/>

**Vicky:** First of all, Kieran, I would like to say that it is a pleasure to have you with us.

**Kieran Donaghy:** Thank you very much for inviting me.

**Vicky:** Your last book, 'Film in Action' has been out for some time now and has truly made an impact. This is the first one actually you are not co-authoring. What are the challenges of writing a book on your own, without sharing the 'load' with someone else?

**Kieran Donaghy:** 'Film in Action' has been out for just over a year now, and it has a lot of very positive reviews. My publisher, Delta Publishing, are very happy as sales are very high for a methodology book. Writing a methodology book on my own was a real challenge; I'd previously co-authored books and this has lots of advantages – you share the workload, you can bounce ideas off each other, and you can help to motivate each other when things get tough. When you write a book on your own it can be a very solitary experience. However, I had the great fortune of having a truly wonderful editor, Mike Burghal, who put his heart and soul into the project, and in many ways it was as if I had a co-author in Mike as he helped guide me and motivate me throughout the writing process. If the book is any good, at least half of the credit has to go to Mike for the fantastic work he did on it.

**Vicky:** You are a fervent believer that films can play an important role in education. What will this role be?

**Kieran Donaghy:** This is an excellent question which requires quite a detailed answer. Firstly, we need to examine the role of film in society. Today, we acquire the majority of our information through moving image media: the cinema, the television, the internet, and the screens that surround us where we work, shop, travel, socialise,

and learn. Film is very much at the heart of these moving image media which are an important and valuable part of our culture. Technological developments, such as the advent of the internet and the digital revolution, the proliferation of mobile devices which allow us to capture moving images easily, the introduction of cheap and accessible video editing tools and the emergence of video-sharing sites such as YouTube and Vimeo, have changed for ever the way moving images relate to society. In his excellent book *The Age of the Image*, which I think is required reading for any educator, Stephen Apkon argues: 'What we are now seeing is the gradual ascendance of the moving image as the primary mode of communication around the world: one that transcends languages, cultures and borders. And what makes this new era different from the dawn of television is that the means of production – once in the hands of big-time broadcasting companies with their large budgets – is now available to anyone with a camera, a computer and the will.'

The fact that children and young people now have access to technology which allows them to become media producers in their own right has important consequences for our society and educational system.

It would seem, therefore, to make sense for schools to focus on the moving image and capitalise on students' knowledge and enthusiasm. However, many teachers believe that a focus on core issues in the curriculum does not allow time for films and television. Furthermore, there is a tendency in society to assume that moving image media are bad for children and could detract from 'real' education. On the whole, our educational systems have been very slow to respond to the new visual technologies and the ascendance of the moving image in our society.

In *English Teaching and the Moving Image*, Andrew Goodwyn comments on the failure of our educational systems to embrace the moving image effectively: 'Given the prominence of the moving image in twentieth century culture, and the current evidence that it seems to be even more dominant in the twenty-first, it may seem more peculiar that its study is not at the heart of a postmodern education.'

To better understand this slow reaction of our educational systems to the new visual technology and the dominance of the moving image, it is necessary to explore the concept of literacy which is currently undergoing a radical change and its impact on our educational systems.

Literacy has been traditionally linked to an alphabet or a language code – that is, through reading and writing – and linked with print media. There has been a strong dependence on linguistic theories to define literacy. Consequently, education has been dominated for centuries by written language and by print in particular. For a long period, the book was the dominant medium of communication. However, with the challenge of a technologically evolving landscape and the ascendance of the image, particularly the moving image, the screen has taken that place. The fact that the book has now been superseded by the screen in the role of dominant medium of communication means the definition of literacy as decoding print is now outdated and deficient, we must combine language-based theory with semiotics (the study of signs

and symbols and how they are used) and other visual theories, to provide an appropriate meaning to the term 'literacy' in the twenty-first century.

As literacy, in its broadest sense, now reflects a wider cultural competence, the hugely important role of film in our culture and society should be sufficient justification for ensuring their integration in our educational systems. The importance of visual literacy in education is widely acknowledged. It is generally agreed that education needs to develop students' skills and ability to interpret image and to communicate visually, and in schools there is a very gradual move away from a reliance on print as the primary medium of dissemination and instruction towards visual media and the screen. However, visual literacy and, more particularly, film literacy are still absent from, or on the margins of, national and international policy agendas. While the 'traditional' arts such as music, art and literature have long been established as core elements of national curricula in many countries, film education has typically been ignored. There is a lack of understanding by policy makers about the importance of film in children's lives and, as a consequence, in our educational systems. There is also a lack of a structured, systematic opportunity for students to watch, analyse, interpret and understand films, and even less opportunity for students to make their own films as part of their overall preparation for adult life.

If students are to successfully meet the social, cultural, political and economic demands of their futures, they need to be able to read and write in all forms of communication. The film director George Lucas asks the pertinent question: 'If learners aren't taught this new language of sound and images shouldn't they be considered as illiterate as if they left college without being able to read and write?'

Educating children and young people to be film literate is about democratic entitlement and civic participation. The skills needed for the modern day workplace are quite different from what they were even twenty years ago, yet our educational systems seem to be caught in a time trap. In our schools, we urgently need the introduction of structured, systematic opportunities for students to watch, analyse, interpret and understand films, and opportunities for students to make their own films as part of their overall preparation for life.

Educational programmes should make use of visual and digital media, and show students how to make their own visual texts, which better prepare students for their futures in a rapidly-changing world because, film-making develops many of the life skills – such as communication, creativity, collaboration, innovation, conflict management and decision making – that are increasingly valued in the modern-day workplace.

I'm sorry that my response has been so lengthy, but I hope it answers your question.

**Vicky:** Is there a visual language analogous to written language? How easy is it for us teachers to teach our learners how to critically think about it?

**Kieran Donaghy:** Yes, there is undoubtedly a visual language which is analogous to written language, but to comprehend this visual language we need to explore the terms 'text', 'to read', and 'to write'. Text has traditionally referred to a book or other written or printed work. However, we can also use the terms 'visual text' to refer to photos and paintings, and 'moving image text' to refer to feature films, clips, short films and videos, as well as learner-generated content. They are texts, in the same way that books are texts – in the sense that they can be read (analysed and interpreted) and written (created). To read has been used for centuries to refer to the action of decoding and understanding written or printed texts, and to write has conventionally referred to the ability to communicate in writing or print. However, we can also use the term 'read the screen' to mean to analyse and interpret moving image texts, and the term 'write the screen' to mean to make moving image texts.

So it's necessary not just to think of texts as only books, reports, books etc, but also photos, paintings, videos, films, etc. When we understand that photos, painting, videos and films are visual texts we see that we can analyse and interpret them.

Indeed print and moving image texts share many common textual strategies. Both print and moving image texts:

- tell stories;
- differentiate between fact and fiction;
- present characters;
- convey a sense of place and context;
- include generic features that help us to recognise certain types of stories.

Research also shows there are many connections between the processes involved in reading print texts and moving image texts. Children who are able to draw on these connections and parallels between moving image texts and print texts are more likely to become confident and critical readers across different media, including print.

The concept of narrative is fundamental in linking print and moving image media. By exploring how a moving image text 'tells a story', children use the concrete examples of the visual to develop their comprehension of the more abstract nature of written texts.

Children's understanding of narrative structure, and their ability to develop understanding of characterisation and plot, are similar for both print and moving image texts. Thus, print literacy and moving image literacy are not mutually exclusive, but can be developed alongside each other to mutual benefit to enhance learners' understanding of all texts.

To answer the question about how easy is it for us teachers to teach our learners how to critically think about it, I would say it can be very difficult as the vast majority of teachers have received no specific training in visual literacy or media production. I feel strongly that training in visual literacy and media production should become a

standard requirement for all teacher teaching training programmes so that teachers can learn to teach communication in all its forms and build systematic opportunities for their students to watch, analyse, interpret and understand moving images texts. Sooner or later ELT has to deal with the issue of visual literacy, but seems very reluctant to do so.

**Vicky:** Your very successful blog site, *Film English*, is now known and used by the majority of ESL teachers worldwide. Updating such a blog regularly, like you have been doing for years, with new lesson plans may, at some point, become a routine. How do you keep your enthusiasm and motivation high with this project?

**Kieran Donaghy:** I've been writing lesson plans designed around short films for *Film English* for the last 6 years. The site has been more successful than I ever imagined even in my wildest dreams; there are about 35,000 subscribers and it gets about 10,000 page views a day. However, it's very difficult to find the time to maintain it regularly as I have full-time teaching schedule, do teacher training, speak at conferences, write books and articles, as well as having a family. I used to add a new lesson plan every week but that's impossible now; I try to add new materials every 2 or 3 weeks now, but as I don't charge anything for the materials and as I get more requests to do writing projects which pay, and I need to pay my rent, it's more difficult to update the site regularly. Having said that, the positive feedback I get from teachers around the world does help to maintain my enthusiasm and motivation. In addition, *Film English* has always been a labour of love for me and I put a lot of myself into the materials, so that also keeps me motivated.

**Vicky:** Where/how do you find the films you use in your lesson plans? How time-consuming a process is it?

**Kieran Donaghy:** I find nearly all the short films I use on *Film English* on Vimeo which is a video sharing site. What makes Vimeo different from YouTube is that it is a relatively small community of film-makers who share their short films on the site; you don't get the overwhelming quantity of videos you get on YouTube, and the quality of the short films is much higher; so it's much easier to find high-quality, artistic short films on Vimeo than it is on YouTube. On Vimeo I only watch films which are on the Staff picks channel, which, as its name suggest, is a channel where the people who work at Vimeo select what they think are the best short films. When I first started writing materials for *Film English* it took me an incredible amount of time to find the sort of short films which are effective in the language classroom. However, now after having watched literally thousands of short films, I've got almost a sixth sense for the type of film which will work well with language students, and it doesn't take me so long. Nonetheless, it's still a very time-consuming process to find just the right film!



**Vicky:** Kieran, thank you for your time!

**Kieran Donaghy:** An absolute pleasure, Vicky!

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**Vicky Papageorgiou** is a foreign language teacher (English, Italian, Greek) with approximately 20 years of experience, mainly with adult learners. She holds an MA in Education (Open University of Cyprus) and an MA in Art (Goldsmiths College, UK) and she has just completed her PGCE in Technology Enhanced Learning at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David for. She studied in Greece, Italy and the UK but also participated in an international project for the McLuhan program in Culture and Technology for the University of Toronto, Canada. Her fields of interest are Technology enhanced learning, Art in ESL, critical thinking, Inquiry Based learning and teaching adults. She is currently based in Thessaloniki (Greece) working as an Adjunct Lecturer at Metropolitan College.

## **A Shipwreck of a Soul**

by Vladimir Mijatović II2, Užice Grammar School

Searching amongst the devastating waves

He sighs in anguish and yearns

For the love that died in its prime

But the hand of faith still turns.

And as the cries haunt his mind

He longs once more for her embrace

Alas, the waters are not kind

He will never again see her grace.

And still the Gods mock the lovers' dreams

While he's feeding on his hope for her return

They ripple the water drowning his screams.

Searching amongst the devastating waves

His cheeks wet with tears

He steps into the watery graves

And lets them consume his fears.

Teacher: Svetlana Gavrilović



**Annabel Lee**

**A short novel written by Aleksa Nikolić II1, Užice Grammar School**

**AN 2016™**

*For the wisest, and the most beautiful, Tutja.*

### **List of noteworthy characters**

- His worship, King Allan the I , crown king of Rivain (Also referred to as "The kingdom by the sea")
  - Her majesty, the Queen , a beautiful maiden by the name of Annabel Lee
  - The kingsmen , lead by Sir Alex (yeah , I named him after myself, sue me)
  - The queensmen, lead by Sir Peter the witty
  - The fool, Kzasko, left deformed by an incident, losing most of his wits and smarts. His remarks are surprisingly accurate, unknowing to the other characters.
  - Edyrem, the seraphim, protector of Rivain
- Teyrn Loghain, Teyrn of the Ayesleigh, the most powerful noble in all of Rivain, father of Annabel.

### Act I

(Allan)

Setting: the Royal bedroom

"The tail of the fabled comet painted the sky blood red. It was a beautiful thing really, fabled for so many years, yet it was under my reign that it arrived. The magisters say it appears once every thousand years. The common folk, the nobles, the seraphs, they all try to give it a meaning, one way or another, but only I know what it truly represents. It is a symbol, a symbol of our undying love. The Maker himself has sent his blessings, crowning our love with a red crown. Red is a primary color just as our love is a primary deity in this world, nothing is stronger than it," charmingly exclaimed the king, while caressing his Queen.

-You're trying to be too romantic, my King. It's just a silly comet, it doesn't mean anything. It'll be gone before you know it but our love won't. We don't need a silly comet to prove our love. It is kind of cute though, watching you blush over such a thin,' replied the Queen, gently kissing Allan.

Allan was a true king. Although crowned only three years earlier, following the death of his father, King Edgar the Third, but he was still twice the politician his father was. He had already conquered the Antivian province of the Drylands, and freed the southern parts of Rivain, the beautiful islands of Llomerynn, held by the Free Marches for over 200 years. He was a head taller than almost any knight, his eyes were sunk in deep pits, his close-cropped beard was no more than a shadow across his hollow cheeks and bony jawbone. Yet there was power in his stare, an iron ferocity that was screaming out "this man would never, ever turn back from his course." He wasn't merciful to traitors and conspirators, but he knew how to reward loyalty. Hard was the word men used when they spoke of Allan, and hard he was. Yet there was more to him, a part of him not many knew. His passion for Annabel. Most wouldn't believe that he had a side that soft, that vulnerable. The Queen wasn't much different in that matter, she truly loved Allan. Although they didn't always agree, with the Queen being a cheerful lady, always joking and rarely taking things seriously , and the King being the stern person he was, their unity somehow proved perfect, despite many thinking their marriage would fall. The king never took kindly to those who misspoke of his marriage, or his lady - they were hanged for treason.

The king blushed.

- It is true, we don't need anything to prove our love. However, I know that this is a sign, the Maker is telling us that we shall have a son, and that he shall be conceived under this falling star, and that he shall conquer all of Thedas , and bring glory to Rivain , for he shall be as strong as my love for you.

The queen giggled.

-Are you sure you heard that right? We shall conceive a son tonight? Maybe the Maker is saying that we should "conceive" giving our court fool a bigger wage.

- I'm not even sure whether you're joking anymore. Why does thou have to tease so much?

- Only because I love you, said Annabel. So then, how about conceiving that boy now?

The king got confused for a moment and then smiled. Finally, he was going to have an heir, as strong as his love for his beautiful Annabel. Nothing could ruin this moment and nothing did. They made love as passionately as ever, even more so perhaps, and then fell asleep in each other's arms.

The sun shone through the window, and a stray ray found its way into the King's eye. Suddenly, the door to his chamber opened, waking him. He looked around and saw that his wife had already woken up and left the bedroom. A shadowy figure walked into the room.

-Who goes there,' asked the king, still being far too sleepy to recognize anyone.

-What's with you, can't even recognize me all of a sudden?" jokingly said Sir Alex, walking in the light.

The king was now able to recognize the knight. It was his lord-commander, the gallant knight known as Alex the silly by the folk. He had a tendency to take things lightly although he was a truly loyal man, he'd give his life for his king anytime, and the king knew it. A tall, large man, with a shaven beard, he was a typical knight, especially in armor, which he always wore.

- Oh, it's you, Sir. I'm too tired to talk right now, so state your business.

- What a friendly and charming welcome, as expected from you. Now I feel like at home. Might as well take this chamber for myself, why not? , said the knight, chuckling.

-Oh off with you if you're going to start that again. I told you already, I don't like company this early, and I certainly don't like your jokes either.

-My king, you're going to make me cry. And I was just about to name one of my children after you. The grumpy one.

- You know, I really don't think that's a way to address your king. If it wasn't you, I'd have you whipped.

- Charming as ever. Anyhow, there's some commotion in the throne room. Some Banns and Arls have gathered, probably because of the comet, nothing important, but they're making an awful fuss for some reason. I think you should go check it out, straighten things out. The steward begged me to get you, I think he's going to start crying any time, if he hasn't yet.

-Great, nothing beats having to fend off conspiring nobles this early in the morning. But I suppose I shouldn't keep them waiting for too long. I'll get dressed, off with you, go tell them I'll be there in an hour. And where's Annabel?

-Oh, our charming Queen is mingling with the other noblewomen. I heard she was sad because her father didn't show with the other nobles. The word is he's either sick or wounded. She's probably trying to share some of her sorrow with the other women.

The king looked distressed.

- Just leave, and remember to tell them that I'll be there shortly.

-Yes, your grace, said the knight, leaving the room.

The king could hear the knight going down the stairs from his chamber. Was he skipping? He thought to himself "I'll never understand this type of people" and grimly exited the bed to get dressed.

The King exited the room and headed for the throne room. The tower he was in was incredibly tall, and its stairs seemed endless to our king. The tower itself was built by his great ancestor, King Poe the Conqueror."Did he really have to make this tower so tall?,' mumbled the king silently, as he was getting more and more annoyed by the excessive number of stairs. As he finally reached the bottom of the tower, and headed for the door, he was greeted by the court's fool, Kzasko. He felt pity as he did every time he saw the poor man, he once even went as far as to want him executed to end his misery. He was brought to

Rivain all the way from Ferelden, and it wasn't hard to see why, he was the best damn fool there ever was. And on the very way from Ferelden to Rivain, the ship that was carrying the fool got wrecked, near the King's own castle, and every member of the crew drowned with the ship. Except the fool. Although he survived, he was left tragically deformed, and lost most of his wits, once as nimble as a monkey, now he was as nimble as a sloth. The only reason Allan didn't execute him due to a plea from his Queen, who begged him to spare the fool.

The fool looked at his king, and then smiled. He started dancing, and singing:

-Fool's blood. King's blood, blood on the maiden's thigh, but chains for the guests and chains for the bridegroom, aye, aye, aye.

The King nodded, trying to ignore the fool, and proceeded to get into the throne room.

Once he made his way there, he opened the massive wooden doors and entered. As mentioned by Sir Alex, the room was full of those annoying nobles, the one part of kingship Allan disliked. He knew most would want his head and not one of them was clean, especially not with Loghain absent.

He made his way to the throne, sat on it. When he did, he placed his sword on his knees, a sign of hostility, to make sure the Nobles know not to waste his time. His steward then addressed him.

-Your kingship, the Nobles want more lands, more money, more people, and they all claim that it's because the Maker deemed it by sending his comet. What shall we do?

The king, not caring, looked throughout the room, in hope to find his lady.

- Where is the Queen?' asked the king.

- Lady Annabel is out taking a horse ride with her sister. Again, your grace, what shall we do about this commotion?

- Send them home, I don't have the nerves to deal with delusional nobles, trying to grab my lands by claiming some God wants them to.

-Very well, your grace.

The nobles looked disappointed, but most of them left right away. Some tried starting a fight, but they were thrown out by the guards. It brought a smirk on Allan's face.

- There is one more thing however, this one is of the utmost importance, I assure you. "

- What is it?

- Edyrem himself has arrived, he says his bearing a message.

- Edyrem? The Edyrem? I didn't even know he was real. Send him in at once.

-Oh, but I'm already here, your grace," said the angel.

-I am truly humbled to have the fabled angelic protector of my homeland inside my castle's walls. Tell me, what brings you here?

-I'm not here on any pleasant business, that I assure you. I come here with a warning. Be warned; the burning hells are gathering their armies, the Demon lord Azmodan himself is leading the armies. He shall be here within a year. I don't know much because I'm not a demon myself, but rumor has it that he's after your wife.

The king looked furious at this information, yet, scared, vulnerable.

- Why would he want my wife? Is he jealous of our love? Does he wish to end it because he can't have it?

-Your wife is pregnant, and she's going to bear a son. All the demons and all the angels can feel it. It is a fabled warrior, conceived under the red comet by a true king, prophesied to end the Burning hells. Azmodan himself is scared, and will try to kill your wife before she can give birth.

- And what will the High Heavens do? Will your angel brethren stand by me, now that the demons are planning a war? I can't be alone in this, isn't this a chance to end Azmodan, once and for all?

-Yes, and no. The angels can't directly intervene into the world of mortals, however, I, the protector of this land will aid you, both directly and indirectly.

- Then you are all useless to me. I have to gather my armies. Off with you for now, angel. Guard my wife at least, I have an army to gather.

-I shall do that, your grace,' said the angel.

Allan exited the room, showing a sign to Sir Alex to follow him. Alex smiled, winked and then exited the room as well joining the king in the courtyard.

-Did you get the Angel's autograph, I'd love to show it to my wife,' said Alex.

-Out of all the times to joke, you chose this one. A demon is coming, and he wants to kill my wife. Damn you Sir Alex, one more joke like that at this time and I'll have your head, I swear it. I would kill the entire realm if it meant my wife would be safe.

The king's tone made Alex realize the bitterness of the situation. He suddenly became serious.

- So, what do you want me to do, your grace?

- You and your brother, Sir Peter will stay here, at the castle, and prepare any army I send you. They must be ready. The burning hells' army will be here within a year. I don't care about resources, just get my armies ready.

- And what about you, my king. What will you do? You're the better warrior, why not train them yourself?

- I am the king. I will gather the armies. Right now, I'm preparing to ride to Ayesleigh, to visit Teyrn Loghain, and afterwards I shall visit the other nobles.

-Maker help us, your grace.

-Maker help us all,' said the king grimly, knowing fate might take his love, the only thing he valued in life, the only meaning in the universe. The taste was bitter.

## Act II

(Annabel)

Time skip: >8 months

Annabel woke up in the royal bedroom, but something wasn't right. Her husband was missing, he was still off trying to gather an army great enough to battle the demons. She missed her husband ever so, longing for his touch, his face, him. However, she couldn't give in to despair, it was almost wartime, and she knew that a baby was on the way, so she convinced herself to be strong, as she always was. She smiled when she looked at her own belly, she knew that her boy was inside, and she was eager to see him. The ultimate product of her love, and the ultimate pain in the butt she thought. She felt very hungry, probably because of the pregnancy, she thought. Her trustworthy knight, Sir Peter wasn't her guard any more, he had been assigned to train troops along with Sir Alex. She felt lonely at first because she had bonded with Sir Peter quite a bit over the years. He was like a brother to her. But later on, she got used to not having Peter around and made friends with the servant women. She was especially close friends with the cook, because the cook hailed from her homeland, her father's Teyrn. She stopped worrying about her father as well, after seeing the army he had sent to fight for her, she realized that her father had to be right and well, to be able to gather his armies.

She called for her handmaiden to help her up and down the stairs. She always liked walking, unlike her husband, but now that she was pregnant, she feared she'd slip and end up killing the baby, so she usually had help walking down the fabled endless stairs of the King's tower. The footmen were training in the courtyard, an usual sight these days. She tried her best to ignore them and proceeded into the kitchen.

The vast amount of smells coming from the kitchen instantly brought a huge smile on Annabel's face. Not all of them were pleasant but she enjoyed them all the same. It reminded her of her childhood. She never

liked being caged, so she mostly spent her time outdoors, unlike the other ladies. What was the use of life if I was going to spend it all inside the tower was Annabel's personal way of viewing life. She sat down at the kitchen crew's personal dining table and called for the cook. The table was all but fancy, and the king would probably flip out if he saw her eating at the help's table, but she didn't mind it. Annabel thought that she wasn't that big of a deal, and that she shouldn't be treated that specially. Her handmaiden was about to leave when she got interrupted by the Queen.

- Oh no, you aren't going anywhere, miss. Are you that eager to get away from me?' said the Queen giggling.

- Of course not, your majesty, but it'd be rude to join a meal with the Queen without being invited.

-It would, wouldn't it? But I'm not going to invite you. And I'm not going to let you leave. So what will you do?

- Heh, I guess I'll join without being invited then.

-I guess you will', said the Queen, clearly happy.

-So then, what'll it be today missy', asked the cook.

- You know, you don't have to cook fancy food every time I show up.

- I know, I just do it because you're my special little Queen.

The Queen chuckled

- Well, I'm still not going to ask for any special food. I'll have what you're having. And you're eating with me. Both of you.

- Oh , very well then,' said both .

The servant women brought them some eggs, some bacon and some honey milk. It wasn't bad all in all, but the milk was way too sweet for the Queen's taste. She didn't say anything, seeing the other two women were clearly enjoying it.

- How are you holding up with your pregnancy, Your Majesty?' asked the Cook

- Oh, the little rascal is due in a few days. I can't wait to meet him. I can feel it, he'll be a great boy, strong and handsome.

- Have you thought about any names, your majesty? A prince needs a name.

- Why not "The nameless prince"?' the Queen said, drinking the third cup of her honey milk. It grew on her after the first one.

- It does sound like a nice name,' replied the cook.

- Allan has already chosen a name for the prince. He's going to be named Poe. He'll be crowned King Poe the First. I'm sure he'll accomplish many things.

- What about the demons, aren't you afraid something will happen?

This. This is the question the Queen has been fearing a long time. But she had to, she had to be strong.

The Queen looked down, at her own feet, as if trying to hide insecurity.

- They don't scare me at all. My King husband is off gathering an army to defeat them. If anyone will manage to do it, he will. After all, he is our king, our general.' And my foolish husband, she thought to herself.

A sudden scream was heard from the back of the kitchen. Chills were sent all through the room, Annabel felt the chilling down her spine, you could sense malevolence, her body started to shiver. The Queen raised her head in shock, only to see that both of her friends were suddenly dead.

- Are you scared yet?' A demonic voice was heard. It was the last thing Annabel ever heard.



### Act 3

(Allan)

Time skip: 3 days

It was almost three days since the king last heard from his castle. But he didn't give up hope. He had gathered the army, and he would save his Queen. That he knew. That was the only thing that seemed real. His love would not die by the hand of some pathetic demons. He would murder them all. Just thinking about it got him mad. Demon blood would be spilled. He would kill them all by himself and save his Annabel. Oh yes, our love was much stronger than demons' pawns, thought the King. They were jealous, that was all. It was never about our son, they were simply envious of our love. They wanted to take him, but I would end their miserable lives.

-Your grace, what do we do? It's said that the demons outnumber us two to one. If we march now, we'll surely perish, and with us, any chance of saving the Queen ...', the king heard, from a voice so close, yet so distant, the king didn't even recognize it.

- Numbers mean nothing, or have you forgotten that, my lord? Our victory was foretold in legends, it is ours to take. I shall fulfill my promise to my Annabel, I will save her. We march to victory, or we march to defeat. But we go forward, only forward. Tell the army to get into the marching formation. We ride for the royal castle in an hour.

- But, your grace...

- I said we march. Get the men into the marching formation, or I'll hang you for treason.

- It shall be as you wish, your grace.

We marched to free the castle, to free the Queen. No other thought crossed the King's mind as he marched through the war ravaged land. The outposts he had made during the year he was preparing for the demons were destroyed, demon and human corpses alike were lying on the ground. Blood was everywhere, but the King didn't mind it, truth be told, he barely thought about it. The only thing that mattered was his love. There was a battle at the sea as well, the whole beach was blood red, just like the comet on the day he conceived his son. He knew the demons were coming, the Angel had warned him against them. But he never expected them to come so soon. It had only been around nine months, he thought he had at least a year. But he should've expected as much, nine months was when his son was due, it should have been obvious that they'd strike at such a time. Pathetic scum, wouldn't leave his love alone. This would be a battle for the ages, and he would ride into the sunset with his love. His only thought was Annabel. She had to be alive, she had to... How could he live without her? What was life without love? Such a meaningless life was worthless, he'd rather die than live without Annabel.

Hours, days passed, which seemed like years to the King as they finally approached the castle. Sunlight reflected off the King's sword, which he named Dawn. The king yelled to his men.

-Brethren, today we fight; we fight for everything humanity stands for. We fight for love, we fight for justice, we fight for revenge.

You could smell the demons' pawns all the way from the camp, which was a few miles away from the castle. The smell made the army nervous and wary.

-Fear not for it is the demons that should fear us. We bring justice, we fight for justice and love, Maker will guide us through this.

The King looked nothing like his old self. He had a longer beard, his sunken eyes were almost blood red, he looked broken. And yet... There was some power in his look. He looked like a man who was never going to give up on his goal. He inspired the men.

The men formed a charging formation.

-FOR THE QUEEN, FOR RIVAIN! COME WITH ME AND TAKE THIS CASTLE!' screamed the king, with his war cry, lifting his sword above his head and charging his mighty horse, Despovich.

The entire army charged towards the castle. Every single knight, every common man with the dream of glory, they all charged, equally inspired by their King's battle cry. The armies stormed the castle, and were met with the demonic horde, already outside it. There wasn't going to be a siege.

The two armies clashed, in a single bloody moment. Time stopped. The demons charged towards the humans, but surprisingly, the humans showed no fear, and fought for their King, for their homeland. It was a glorious battle, the King himself killed many demons. It was promising, the King was assured that victory was his. And at one moment, he got knocked off his horse, falling onto the ground. An arrow killed his horse, Despovich, and knocked the King unconscious. The battle continued, men not noticing their fallen king fought bravely.

The smell. The smell was what woke the King up. It was nightfall. Who knew for how many hours he had slept. He was outside the castle, surrounded by corpses which were made up from both armies and the horses. The stench was unbearable. He picked himself off the ground and made his way to the castle.

The moment he stood up, however, he noticed that his right leg was stabbed. He could barely walk, and even then only when he used his sword as a walking stick. `

And then it became worse.

Suddenly, a demon, which was lying with the other corpses, stood up, and attacked the King.

The King was quick on his foot, and managed to grab a foothold and parry the attack. The demon underestimated the King, which he knew the moment Allan chopped its head off with one decisive slash.

Allan now progressed into the castle. The courtyard was even worse than anything. Corpses were old here, a few days old, they were rotting. Worms were feasting on the corpses of the dead, as Allan was humping to the throne room. The stench almost made him puke, but he had to know what happened to Annabel. Maker, Allan thought as he noticed some of the corpses. All of the king's men, all of the queen's men, they were all dead, with their Lord Commanders. It looked like they had died without fighting. It must have been overnight. The king feared the worst and started moving as quickly as his leg would allow him. He had to make it in time, he had to save his Annabel.

He opened the massive wooden doors and entered the throne room.

Inside, he saw an old face, the angel, Edyrem.

- What has transpired here?

-Look behind me, your grace, and see with your own eyes what has happened.

Tears came to the King's eyes. He fell on his knees and let out a mighty roar. His wife, his Annabel, and their son, who was never born, Poe the First, were both made into corpses hanging with chains from the ceiling. What was life? Life was torment, the King knew it. Maker himself was jealous of his love, so he did this.

She was beautiful, even in death. Perfect. Maker was jealous of her perfection, so he took her. Her beautiful green eyes were forever closed, her belly slashed open, but yet she was still perfect.

- You won the war, your grace. The demon was defeated. You did lose all your men, and your wife, but you can rebuild what has been lost. Congratulations, I didn't...

-SILENCE, ANGEL!' yelled the king desperately.

-Is this a victory? The only important things in my life hang dead. It is all your fault, oh yes, I know. It wasn't just the demons, it was you angels as well. You were jealous of our perfect love, yes, I know that, so you tried taking it. You cooperated with the demons to destroy the love that was perfect, you feared its perfection.

- I assure you, I'd never try to kill a human I'm tasked to protect, and I'd never ally with a demon.

-LIES! You will be quiet when I speak, fairy.

- Careful now, mortal. One does not call an angel protector a "fairy".

- I hereby declare war on you, Angelic trash. You are the one who separated me from my love. You're the one to blame. I hereby declare war on all of you angels. I shall march my grand army into the high heavens and reclaim the soul of my Annabel, the one you took. I shall force the Maker himself to give her back to me.

-I see. You are banished from the immortal realm, Allan. We shan't see each other again. You have let rage and despair overcome you. You do not know what you're saying. Goodbye, mortal.

- How dare you address me like that, Angel. I know very well what I'm saying. I will kill you, and I will kill all your brethren, and free my Annabel.

But it was of no use as the angel had already disappeared.

The king fell down on the floor, next to the hanged bodies of his son and Annabel, and started crying. When he finally came back to himself, days later, he took the bodies off and buried them in a sepulchre. He spent the rest of his days there, by their tomb, and when he sensed death approaching, he opened the grave and entered it himself, forever next to his Annabel Lee.

***The End***

English Language Teacher: Svetlana Gavrilović

# Annabelle Lee

By Tamara Lacmanović II1, Užice Grammar School

In a world of magic and in the land by the sea lived a beautiful girl who bore the name of Annabelle Lee. She spent her days locked in an old castle whose walls were separating her from her beloved sea, always keeping her away from the outside world. She was devoid of direction and any kind of real purpose, always aimlessly wandering around this unsettling prison, carrying the feeling of uneasiness with her. Was she a princess? She didn't know. The evil glares of other residents of the castle that were constantly being thrown her way said that she was anything but a lost princess. Eventually she gathered that much on her own after one of the witches tried to poison her on her very birthday. A cyclop even pushed her down the staircase once in hope of getting rid of her for good. After that incident she was absolutely sure that she was viewed as some kind of terrible mistake. An unspeakable error whose existence brought only chaos it seemed. She felt unwanted and miserable for a long time. Was her entire existence that unbearable? How did she deserve such cruelty? After a while though she started believing in all the awful things others had to say about her. She fell into despair and ended up becoming her biggest enemy.

However, the arrival of a certain boy changed everything. Annabelle immediately noticed that the boy was treated the same way she was. Seeing him being disrespected in so many ways and unfairly treated like her brought back many unpleasant memories. It was too much for a little girl like Annabelle. The pain was unendurable. The decision to help the strange boy came naturally to her and so they became each other's only friend. They carried the same unfortunate fate of never being allowed to step outside the giant walls and experience other joys of life. Forever cursed, destined to die in the unpleasant arms of the castle. Imprisoned by their cruel destiny they found sanctuary in each other's company. The boy, as Annabelle learned, was indeed very odd. He claimed that he could see and talk to demons, which was questionable considering that no mortal being was ever gifted with such ability. Despite everything, she liked the peculiar boy whose eyes resembled the depths of the oceans and whose scratched hands always carried her favorite flowers, the ones that could talk all day about everything and nothing at all. Sometimes they were the only thing that kept her sane when the busiest of rooms were enveloped in silence and the cold abandoned corners got even darker than before. And during the nights when loneliness prevailed the flowers would whisper sweet nothings into her small ears. She thoroughly enjoyed the boy's company and slowly but surely realized the deep affection she had for him. They grew up side by side, always cherishing the precious moments they shared, which eventually blossomed into the love that only grew stronger as the time passed. Their love ensured the long awaited happiness that both of them desperately needed at times. It was that kind of love that could cure even the worst of illnesses. But love so pure was yearned by many jealous souls. Their hunger was very overwhelming sometimes but it was never able to separate the two lovers.

Everything changed when Annabelle Lee found out the truth about her upbringing. It was on one of the many quiet summer evenings that Annabelle decided to sneak into one of the rooms on top of the castle's tallest tower. The room was always well secured. If it wasn't guarded by two giant trolls than it was locked with a special spell provided by an old warlock. It's safe to say that the room was one of the castle's many well kept secrets. Surprisingly, she saw no smelly trolls around the door and no magical runes which indicated that the room was indeed unguarded. While she was looking for a way to enter the room without any complications she saw the wooden door open on its own accord. It was like the room itself wanted her there. Carefully, she stepped inside. What she saw was something she would never forget. The room was actually a magical library but not like the old dusty library that was situated on the first floor. This one had shelves that were placed in midair and books that were flying everywhere. One of the books found its way into Annabelle's gentle hands. It was a really old book, probably the oldest one there. She examined the book and strangely enough found no writing on it, just plain black covers that barely held the content of the book together. When she finally opened it she heard a calming voice. She raised her head and looked around the room but found no one. When she discovered that the voice belonged to the actual book she frantically threw it away but the voice was still there telling her some kind of myth about children who were born from the love of an angel and a demon. It went on and on about how those children couldn't ever be treated as anything more than fatal mistakes, about how they should be eliminated as fast as possible. Annabelle suddenly put the pieces together and finally understood why others behaved the way they did towards her loved one and her. Their love was forever destined to be despised. She sank to the floor, trying not to hyperventilate but failed miserably. Her body began to shake uncontrollably and then, all of a sudden, a strong force pulled her towards the window that was overlooking the sea coast and harshly pushed her over the edge. Annabelle wanted to scream and shout for help but her voice betrayed her. Everything was happening so fast but she had to face the reality of the situation. She was to never see her love again, not in this life she supposed. Soon, she was going to die. So she let the hot tears that were being piled up all this time finally stream down her cold cheeks as she became one with the sounding sea.

English Language Teacher: Svetlana Gavrilović

## My trip to the US

By Jelena Špegar, II grade, Mathematical Grammar School, Belgrade

In June this year I had an amazing opportunity to visit the US, the so called 'The Land of the Free'. My brother finished his studies at Stanford University in California, so my parents and I couldn't miss the graduation ceremony.

The trip was extremely exhausting. In total we travelled about 25 hours in one direction using the car, the airplane, the bus... My brother's friends picked us up at the airport in San Francisco and drove us to Palo Alto where our hotel was. The difference between our world in Serbia and theirs in California was visible from the first moment. Even the things that sound boring were fascinating, like the beautiful Californian vegetation around the freeway that I'd only seen in movies until then. The palms which were so exotic to me were commoner than the lamp posts. In the evening we finally arrived at the hotel and I fell asleep immediately. I finally understand why people complain about jet lag.

The next day we visited my brother Rade at the university. There weren't many people, only the graduates, but the atmosphere was surprisingly relaxed. The students were barbecuing, sunbathing on the grass, cooling down in the fountains. He walked us through the most important places and buildings in the campus. I felt like I was in a luxurious beach resort rather than a university. We were walking more than three hours constantly and we still didn't visit more than 10 percent of the campus.

While we were having lunch, some of Rade's friends showed up. I was scared that my English was too rusty, but they either didn't notice it or didn't care about it. One of the first things that I noticed was the diversity of students. In our small group of eight only the two of his friends were Caucasian, the others were from India, Philippines, China and Thailand.

The next two days were completely booked with the official graduation events. First there was the baccalaureate where they were parading in their gowns and caps. The next day it was the commencement at the stadium where they did the "wacky walk", they walked, danced and ran around the stadium in different costumes. Famous documentary filmmaker Ken Burns, as well as some of their professors, gave very inspiring speeches. I was impressed how they preserved their tradition although the US has one of the youngest cultures in the world. The final part of the ceremony was the diploma ceremony where every department gave out diplomas to their students. I don't know if I've ever felt so proud than when Rade came to the stage to get his diploma.

Almost every evening someone would throw a graduation party either planned or spontaneous. For me, the parties were very unusual compared to the ones in Serbia. First of all, there wasn't pork on the menu but prawns, lobsters and a lot of fancy cheeses and wines. My favorite dish from the party were definitely oxtails. The parties were an amazing opportunity for me to practise my informal English with people of my age.

Of course, we also did a little shopping, but one of the most unexpected things, at least for me, was the kindness and niceness of people living and working there. I haven't stepped into one single shop where the clerk didn't ask me how I was, where I'm from and how they could help me and did sound genuinely interested. This was one of the biggest differences and positive impressions compared to Serbia.

On our last day we went on a trip to San Francisco. First we arrived at the very centre of the city and I was really disappointed. The streets were dirty and there were a lot of sketchy

people that I was afraid of from time to time. But, once we arrived at the richer part of the city my impression changed completely. We visited the chocolate factory, stopped by for a lavender coffee, took pictures next to the Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz Island (prison). One of the most exciting places for me was The Palace of Fine Arts, an incredible monument.

Once we were tired of walking, we used the Uber application to order a car, which is much safer, cheaper and more practical than a taxi. We went for some burgers in Palo Alto which were the most amazing ones I've tasted in my life, and of course, for a traditional American milkshake in a retro looking diner.

My trip to the US has changed a lot of my views regarding lifestyle, food, education and even cars. I am very grateful for such a great opportunity to get to know a culture so different from ours and practise my English speaking which I can't do in Serbia. I'm glad I've stayed in touch with some of the friends I met there, they are some of the funniest, kindest people as well as the most well-rounded personalities I've ever met. I hope I will have the chance to visit that place again.

*Jelena Špegar, II grade (finished)*  
*English teacher Mirjana Savić Obradović*  
*Mathematical Grammar School, Belgrade*



*Rade and I at Stanford University; I approve the publishing of this photo.*



*With my parents, San Francisco; I approve the publishing of this photo.*



**Ken Wilson**

**The Duke's portrait**

**The Duke's portrait**  
**A novel by Ken Wilson**

**Chapter 1**

**EAT ARK**

The steam engine pulling the Oxford to Cheltenham train lurched to a halt at Stanford Saint Mary and hissed wearily. The only passenger to alight was Charles Goodgame, a young man with untidy sandy-coloured hair who was wearing a crumpled cream suit. He stumbled out of the compartment that he had been sharing with an elderly vicar and his wife, put his battered leather suitcase and a wooden box down on the platform and promptly fell over them. The stationmaster marched down the platform, grabbed one of Charles's arms and tugged him to his feet.

"Ouch! Um... thank you," said Charles. "Oh, bugger!" he added, when he realised that his portfolio of canvases and his hat were still on the train. "Hold on a sec." He turned to get back into the compartment but the stationmaster, who was a tall powerful man, continued to hold his arm in an iron grip.

"I say, can you let go?" said Charles. "I need to get back on the train."

"The train is about to depart," said the stationmaster, and blew his whistle. Charles pulled away from him, opened the compartment door and leapt inside. The stationmaster slammed the door behind him and blew his whistle a second time. When the train started moving, Charles had no choice but to lean up and pull the communication cord. The train braked, and he fell and landed heavily in the vicar's lap.

"Uuuuuuuf!" said the vicar.

"Awfully sorry," replied Charles. He pulled himself to his feet, the train lurched again, and he fell the other way onto the vicar's wife.

"Aaaaaaaaaaah!" she said.

"Many apologies," said Charles.

"Don't mention it," she said, giving Charles a fleeting smile.

Charles put on his hat, grabbed the portfolio, opened the door and quickly stepped back onto the platform, where the stationmaster grabbed him by the shoulder. "I arrest you for a railway-related misdemeanour," he said, with relish.

"Really?" said Charles. "Can you actually do that?"

Instead of answering, the man emitted a loud yelp and collapsed in a heap on the platform. Charles looked down at him, puzzled. When he looked up again, he saw his stepsister Polly Capstan standing behind the fallen giant.

"Hello, Chas!" she said, brightly.

"Good God, Pol, did you do that?"

"Knock out our friend here? Yes."

"How?"

"Yoko Geri," said Polly.

"What?"

"Yoko Geri. It's a karate kick."

"Is he still alive?"

Polly looked down at the inert stationmaster. "I imagine so. Yoko Geri is only fatal in about ten per cent of cases."

"Good," said Charles. "What?"

The vicar was at the window of the compartment. "Is this train leaving or not?" he asked. He looked down and saw the stationmaster lying on the platform. "I say," he added, "is that chap all right?"

"He's fine, he just fainted," said Polly. "A touch of sunstroke."

"Sunstroke?" repeated the vicar doubtfully, looking up at the dark skies. "In November?"

Polly bent down and took the whistle from the unconscious man's hand and blew it hard. The steam engine whistled a reply and the train moved slowly away.

"We'd better make ourselves scarce," she said, pocketing the whistle. She picked up the wooden box and Charles grabbed his suitcase and portfolio. They hurried out of the station, where an open-topped two-seater sports car was parked. Polly opened the boot and threw the box into it.

"I say, be careful," said Charles. "Those are my oils."

"Just put your things in there and get in the car," said Polly. "We have to get away from the scene of the crime."

"Oh right," said Charles. "What about that chap you just knocked out? Shouldn't we --?"

"Get *in*, will you?"

Polly was already in the driving seat, revving the engine. Charles quickly put his suitcase and portfolio into the boot, slammed it shut and just made it into the car before she

pressed her foot hard on the accelerator and the car roared away from the station and out of the village. His hat flew off, but he caught it in time and jammed it between his knees.

He looked at his stepsister admiringly, as she gripped the huge steering wheel, her teeth biting her bottom lip, her long blonde hair flying wildly behind her. As always, he felt an urgent attraction towards her and, as always, he tried in vain to subdue it.

"Is this car yours?" he asked.

"No."

"You haven't stolen it, have you?"

"Of course not. It belongs to Gilbert."

"Who's Gilbert?"

"A friend."

The needle on the large round speedometer passed sixty miles an hour. The noise of the engine increased, making it almost impossible to have a conversation.

"It's awfully fancy," said Charles. "What is it?"

"SORRY?"

"WHAT KIND OF CAR IS IT?"

"Oh. It's an Alfa Romeo. Latest design, almost brand new. It has an inline six engine."

"What does that mean?"

"Six cylinders, in a straight line. Revolutionary."

"I'll take your word for it."

"Don't you know anything about cars?"

"Not a thing," said Charles. "By the way, I didn't know you'd passed your driving test."

"I haven't," said Polly.

"What?"

"Relax, Chas! Driving this thing is a piece of cake. Oh heck..."

She swerved to avoid a small furry creature and the car careered towards the tall thorny hedgerow on the left hand side of the road.

"Look out!" yelled Charles.

The car slammed into the hedgerow and sped along, shaking from side to side. Charles yanked his arm away from the door as sharp hawthorns rat-tat-tatted against the windscreen and then against him. Polly turned sharply to the right and the car accelerated across the road and scraped along the hedgerow on the other side.

"For Christ's sake, Pol, slow down, will you? You're going to kill us both if you drive like this!"

"Chas, you're such a worry-widger, just relax."

"Relax? You nearly ripped my bally arm off!"

She turned the wheel to the left, then to the right, then left again. The car zigzagged down the narrow lane until she got it back in control and continued more or less in a straight line.

"I'm so glad you're here," said Polly. "I've missed you."

Despite his increasing sense of alarm, Charles felt a glow of delight when he heard these words. The only time his life was even remotely exciting was when he was with his stepsister. He put fear for his safety to the back of his mind and gripped the sides of the leather seat.

"So," she said, darting a look at him. "Are you pleased you made the effort to get out here to the sticks?"

"Of course I am," he replied. Polly had written to Charles a few weeks before, inviting him to come out to Stanton Saint Mary to paint the portrait of her employer.

"Imagine," he said, "me getting the chance to paint the Duke of Burfaughtonleigh."

"It's pronounced Burley, actually," said Polly. She approached a crossroads and drove across it without looking to right or left. An old man on a bicycle swerved into a ditch to avoid her. Charles looked back, watching the man curse and shake his fist as he disappeared from view.

The road they were on now was lined with mature trees that hung over the road, looming dangerously just above their heads. Charles ducked as the car weaved its way under them.

"OK, first of all, I need to clear something up," said Polly. "The Duke is actually expecting Walter Washbrook to paint his portrait."

"What?"

"The Duke is ---"

"I heard what you said. He's expecting Walter Washbrook to paint his portrait?"

"Yes."

"The chap who paints royalty?"

"The very same."

"So what am I doing here?" asked Charles.

"You're going to pretend to be Walter Washbrook."

"Polly, is this some kind of joke?"

"No, I'm deadly serious."

"But Walter Washbrook is about sixty!"

Walter Washbrook was probably the most successful portrait painter in the country, having been commissioned to paint not only King George but also several of his children, but Charles and everyone in the art world knew that his entire career was built on one immense stroke of luck. In 1877, when he was twelve years old, he was forced by his parents to spend time in Devon on a cadet training ship called HMS Britannia. The young Prince George, who was the same age, was also working on the ship, his parents having despaired of his inability to learn anything from tutors and deciding that he might at least be able to serve in the navy. At the time, no one expected George to become king, he was after all the third son, and he was generally thought to be a bit of a failure and had no friends. Washbrook's parents were similarly disappointed in their son. The two boys hit it off immediately and remained firm friends throughout their lives.

"Sixty, is he?" repeated Polly. "In that case, it isn't going to be easy."

"Polly!"

"Don't worry, I was only joking."

"Thank goodness."

"I mean I was only joking about not knowing how old Walter Washbrook is. I've seen a photograph of him in a magazine. Fear not. I have a plan to make you look just like a sixty-year-old buffer who paints portraits of kings and queens."

"What are you talking about?"

"Chas, do try to keep up. Before we meet the duke, I'm going to disguise you to look like Walter Washbrook."

"But why? Why are we doing this?"

"Relax. As usual, Pol has a plan. All will be explained."

Charles thought for a moment. "Look here!" he said, quite firmly. "You told me that the Duke had asked for me personally to paint his portrait. You have brought me here under false pretences."

"I didn't, and I haven't," replied Polly, as the car zoomed over a slow-moving hedgehog in the middle of the road. "What I said was that the Duke wanted his portrait painted and I thought you'd be the ideal person to do it. The trouble is, he didn't agree with me. He said he was very keen on this Washbrook chap, so of course I said I knew him, too."

"Do you?"

"Do I what?"

"Know Walter Washbrook?"

"Well, I know who he *is*," said Polly. "So I wasn't actually telling fibs."

Charles snorted with exasperation. "The duke will know I'm not Walter Washbrook," he said. "I'm a hundred per cent certain of that."

"No he won't," said Polly. "Gerald has never seen a photo of him."

"Gerald?"

"The Duke."

"Ah, right. How do you know this duke chap, anyway?"

"I'm his secretary."

Charles burst out laughing. "You? A secretary? You can't even type! Never mind type, you can't even *spell*!"

Polly's face clouded over for a moment. "Well, maybe Gerald has seen some hidden talent of mine that you haven't."

I bet he has, thought Charles. "So how did you get the job?" he asked.

"Gilbert told me about it."

"Gilbert. The chap who owns this car?"

"Yes."

"Who is he?"

"Gilbert Woolnough, the Marquess of Stanford. He's Gerald's son."

"How do you know him?"

"I met him at a party in Chelsea and ..."

"And...?"

"And ... we got chatting."

"You got chatting with a marquess."

"You know how much I enjoy meeting rich young men," said Polly. She laughed. "That was a joke," she added.

Charles knew full well it wasn't a joke. Not only did Polly enjoy meeting rich young men, she also made a habit of getting engaged to them. She had been engaged four times so far, if Charles's memory served, and there were possibly more he didn't know about, a succession of young men with more money than sense who had fallen for her eccentric charms. She had accepted most of the proposals, but she always called the engagement off as soon as she took possession of a ring, which she then sold. Charles presumed that selling engagement rings was one of the ways she made a living.

"Hold onto your hat, we're nearly there."

They were passing a high crumbling stone wall and now the car swerved left onto a muddy track which led to an open gate. As they approached the gateway, Charles saw an old dilapidated sign behind the wall. It had been ravaged by the weather over the years and

the writing on it was faded and almost unreadable. He could just about make out the letters EAT ARK.

"What's the name of this place?" he asked.

"Great Park."

"Ah," said Charles. He thought for a moment and then said: "Look, Pol, I don't think I can go through with this."

"You can and you will."

"The thing is ... "

Polly put her foot down hard on the brake and the car lurched to a stop in the mud, half in and half out of the gate. Charles had to put his hands on the dashboard to prevent his head from hitting the windscreen. Polly turned and grabbed his chin with her left hand. He was alarmed by the fierce look in her eyes.

"The thing *is*, brother dear," she said, holding his face in a tight grip which really hurt, "... the thing is that I have a plan which is going to make us a lot of money."

"A lot of money? You said I'd get fifty pounds for painting the old boy's phizog. That isn't a *lot* of money."

"Painting the Duke's portrait is just a way to get you into the house. My plan involves doing something that will make us an absolute *heap* of money."

"What? Doing what?" Charles had visions of wearing a mask and a striped pullover and carrying a sack bulging with the family silver, and being chased by dogs through the grounds of Great Park. "Look, Pol, whatever it is, leave me out of it. I'm not the criminal type."

She let go of his jaw. Charles decided enough was enough. Much as he liked the idea of spending time with Polly in a fancy country house, he wasn't at all keen on the idea of doing something illegal. He wondered how he could get back to the station.

"Not the criminal type?" repeated Polly. "Really?"

"Really," he replied.

"Shall we talk about the painting you sold to that friend of my mother's?"

Charles stared at her. "You wouldn't."

"Try me."

Of course, Polly knew about the painting. If she ever did tell anyone what she knew, it would be curtains.

"What is it you want me to do?" he said.

"I want you to paint the Duke's portrait."

"I know that. What's the big money-making plan?"

"Let me finish," she said. "The Duke has some extremely valuable works of art hanging around the place, and one of them is a Van Gogh."

"Seriously?" said Charles. "Which one?"

"It's a portrait of Robert Louis Stevenson."

"The chap who wrote *Treasure Island*?"

"Yes."

Charles had studied Van Gogh as part of his course at the Royal College of Art, he had even visited the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, but he had never heard of a Van Gogh portrait of Robert Louis Stevenson. "Are you sure it's genuine?" he asked.

"Absolutely. The duke's previous secretary took it to Sotheby's to get it valued."

"So what is this great plan of yours? Steal the painting?"

"Yes."

"You're mad."

"But first you're going to paint a copy of it."

"Now that is *totally* mad."

"I know. But I also know that you can do it. You once told me you could copy anybody's style except that Spanish chap. Is his name Picossi?"

"Picasso," said Charles. "Pablo Picasso."

In front of them was a wide tree-lined drive, which presumably led to the main house. Polly started the engine and drove about a hundred yards, but then turned left down a muddy track. The car passed through a small copse of willow trees and came to a halt outside what appeared to be an abandoned cottage.

"Where are we?" asked Charles. "I mean, I presume this isn't Great Park."

"Well done, Sherlock, right first time," said Polly. "This is Willow Cottage."

"Do you live here?"

"No, I don't. My friend Garth lives here. He's the Duke's gardener."

"So why are we here?"

"I have to turn you into Walter Washbrook before we go to the main house."

"But this Garth chap, how does he fit into all this?"

"This Garth chap, as you call him, is our accomplice."

"Can we trust him?"

"To the ends of the earth and beyond. Get out of the car."

When Charles opened the door of the two-seater and put his foot down on the path, his boot almost disappeared into the mud. He pulled himself up and out of the car, took a step



forward, slipped and fell flat on his face. Polly burst out laughing, and laughed even more when he stood up. He was covered in mud from his sandy hair to his brown boots.

"This is NOT FUNNY!" he shouted, "and to be honest, I'm A BIT ANGRY now!"

Polly walked round the car and stood in front of him. "Charles," she said, "I do love it when you're a bit angry." He started to say something else but she put her arms round his neck and kissed him firmly on his muddy lips.

## Chapter 2

### Are there Goodgames in Worcestershire?

Charles had met Polly for the first time seven years earlier on a Saturday afternoon in July 1931, the day his father Clarence married her mother Leonora. It was a day of torrential thunderstorms. Charles was eighteen, Polly was sixteen.

Clarence Goodgame and Leonora Capstan had been joined in matrimony that morning at Chelsea Register Office, a place that Leonora was very familiar with. In addition to having married her first husband Ronnie there, she had also attended the first or second marriages of various friends and acquaintances. She had been there in 1928 when her American friend Wallis Wargfield married her second husband Ernest Simpson. Leonora told friends that she gave that marriage five years at the most.

The Goodgame/Capstan alliance was an unlikely one. Clarence was a widower who lived alone in Norfolk, and spent his time painting watercolours. Leonora wrote novels, whose fiercely bright heroines would become involved in scandals and other reverses, which they came through, tormented and scarred but defiant and unbowed. The novels were shocking, received damning reviews and sold like hot cakes. In one of them, *The Tangled Truth*, the heroine leaves her husband and runs away with a lover after faking her death by drowning. By coincidence, Charles's first wife Martha was one of Leonora's biggest fans and *The Tangled Truth* was by her bedside on the day she disappeared.

Despite the success of her novels, Leonora was broke. Her publisher George Capstan was also her brother-in-law, so she never paid much attention to trivial matters like contracts and all the money made from the books went into her husband Ronnie's account. Ronnie came home one day and told her he was planning to divorce her and

marry his mistress. The good news was that he would move out of the house and Leonora could stay there.

She was still recovering from the shock of this news when she received a letter telling her that the owner of the house would like to move in. It transpired that six months before, Ronnie had sold the house to a minor member of the royal family to get himself out of a financial hole, with occupation guaranteed in six months' time. On the same day that the letter arrived, Ronnie was arrested and charged with handling stolen goods, namely a Rolls Royce Phantom, a Bentley Speed Six and a Lanchester, and also with a catalogue of other fraudulent misdeeds. By the time of the wedding, Ronnie was safely detained at His Majesty's Pleasure in Wandsworth Prison.

*The Times* society page reported that Leonora and Ronnie's divorce was 'sudden and surprising'. The newspaper also noted that the Capstans were 'very close friends' with the Prince of Wales but decided not to delve more deeply into that part of the story, which had more than a whiff of scandal. Leonora told her close friends that she had only slept with the Prince of Wales once and had been so unimpressed that she never bothered to answer the dozens of messages he sent her. She had introduced him to her friend Wallis Simpson, and was relieved when the American took him off her hands.

Various friends offered to provide Leonora with a temporary abode and she accepted an invitation from her friend Diana, who lived just outside Biarritz. They had driven to the Hôtel du Palais to have tea and were discussing Leonora's parlous financial situation when they noticed a man with a huge hat sitting on the terrace painting a picture. Leonora walked out onto the terrace to have a closer look at him.

"Isn't it just divine?" she said.

The painter was Clarence. He didn't reply.

"I said isn't it just *divine*?" Leonora repeated, rather louder this time.

"I'm sorry, were you talking to me?" asked Clarence, who was unused to being addressed by women he didn't know.

"Yes. The view, it's divine, isn't it?"

"Oh yes," observed Clarence. "That's why I'm painting it." This simple statement of fact caused the woman to gurggle with laughter, which puzzled him.

"I'm Leonora Capstan," she said. "How do you do?"

"Clarence Goodgame," replied Clarence. "Pleased to meet you."

"Goodgame?" repeated Leonora. "Are you related to the Worcestershire Goodgames?"

"Are there Goodgames in Worcestershire?" asked Clarence. "Well I never." Again, he was surprised that this innocuous remark caused Leonora to dissolve into peals of laughter. She walked across the terrace towards him and looked at the painting, which was actually one of his better ones. "That's absolutely marvellous," she said. "Is this a hobby or are you a real artist?"

Clarence found this distinction rather interesting. "Oh, it isn't a hobby," he said. "It's what I do."

"Really? Do you sell many paintings?"

He considered the question for a moment. He had sold about half a dozen paintings in his life, all of them to his neighbours in Norfolk, who had asked him to paint pictures of their houses.

"Well, yes, I suppose I have," he said, sounding, as he always did, immensely modest.

"How marvellous. Is your ... um ... wife here with you?"

"I'm afraid I'm widowed."

"I'm so sorry," said Leonora. "Would you care to join us for tea?"

Because Clarence was staying at the Palais, Leonora mistakenly presumed that he was well off. Whether or not his wealth was derived from painting or something else, she cared not a jot. He was an attractive widower and she was, not to put too fine a point on it, as poor as a family of church mice.

In fact, Clarence was broke too. His holiday was being paid for by his older brother Ernest, who was also paying for the wedding reception. The fact that the Goodgames had agreed to hold the reception at the Savoy only confirmed to Leonora that Clarence was, as she had hoped, a rich catch. It would be some weeks before she realised her mistake.

Beyond having an attractive smile, an accidentally comic way with words and a large collection of hats, there wasn't much to Clarence. He had never had a proper job in his life and had not needed to worry about making a living as he and Ernest were left enormous trust funds when their immensely rich Aunt Agatha passed away.

Ernest invested his trust fund in textiles and made a small fortune, but Clarence merely continued to do what he liked best, which was to paint watercolour landscapes at the family home at Fakenham. One Sunday morning at church, he met a girl called Martha, who initially found him to be an amusing companion, so he asked her to marry him. They bought a house at Hunstanton on the coast, where Clarence diversified his output by painting watercolour seascapes.

His ability as a painter was modest but, as his brother Ernest regularly told people, Clarence had a lot to be modest about. However, for a short time, his style was favourably compared to a Norfolk artist called Horace Tuck, who was fashionable in the mid 1920s. Many years later, the painting that his son Charles sold to a friend of Leonora's was mistakenly thought to be an original Tuck.

The arrival of baby Charles had been the only interruption to Clarence and Martha's dull life, but Martha found the whole business of childbirth so alarming that she told Clarence that it must never happen again. Neither parent paid much attention to the child, and they employed a muscular young village girl called Emily as a nanny. Emily terrified Charles so much that he used to hide in the woodshed when it was time for his bath.

At the age of seven, Charles was packed off to boarding school. When he came home at the end of term, he spent most of his time alone, wandering along the beach collecting shells. One day, when his parents were taking an afternoon nap in their separate rooms, Charles went into his father's studio and put an empty canvas on an easel and started to copy one of Clarence's paintings. Eventually, his enjoyment of painting took over from his passion for collecting shells, and he spent every available moment in the studio, whether his father was there or not. When he had copied all his father's paintings, he started copying other paintings that he found around the house. Copying paintings became a hobby which consumed all his free time. By the age of sixteen, he had skills that a serious art forger would be proud of.

Shortly after Charles's sixteenth birthday, his mother walked out of the house saying she was going for a swim, left her clothes and her handbag in a beach hut and was never seen again. Although her body was never found, the coroner eventually decided she was dead and issued a certificate, which gave drowning as the cause of death. Almost the entire adult population of Hunstanton crowded into St Edmund's Church for the funeral and the women of the village wailed and sobbed their way through the service. Then the church emptied and life went back to normal.

Almost a year to the day after the funeral, Clarence received a telegram from his bank in London, asking him to visit them at the earliest possible convenience. Charles telephoned his brother Ernest, who lived in South Kensington, and asked if he could stay overnight. Ernest reluctantly agreed.

At Coutts Bank on the Strand, Clarence was shown into the office of the assistant manager Mr Burgess, a small stooped man with a shiny bald head and wide luxuriant sideburns that almost met under his chin. Mr Burgess was not the bearer of good tidings.

"Good morning, Mr Goodman," he began.

"Goodgame," Clarence corrected him.

Mr Burgess looked at the papers in front of him. "Ah yes, apologies. Well, we haven't met before, but when I was appointed assistant manager of the bank a few weeks ago, I also became trustee of your fund, bequeathed to you by..." Burgess put on his glasses and tried to decipher a spidery signature at the bottom of a document on the desk. "... Angola Meatchase?"

"Agatha Merchant," corrected Clarence. "My aunt Agatha, my father's sister."

"I see. Well, I'm afraid I have rather bad news for you, Mr Goodman. Your trust fund is ... well, it's not in very good shape."

"Really?" said Clarence.

"Yes, indeed. The fact is, it's practically empty."

Clarence stared blankly at him for a moment. "What exactly do you mean by 'practically empty'?" he asked.

"Practically empty," repeated Mr Burgess, searching for another way of stating the obvious. "There's hardly any money in it. In fact, if you continue taking money out at the rate that you do, it will be completely empty by the end of the year."

"But... but I've never taken any money out of it," said Clarence. "I mean, I get an allowance, a cheque, it arrives every month, fifty pounds. I cash it at the post office at Hunstanton."

"Well someone's been taking considerably more than that out of the fund," replied Mr Burgess. He opened a large ledger on his desk until he reached a page with Clarence's name at the top. Burgess looked at the hand-written entries. "Martha Goodgame? Would she be your wife?"

"But my wife is dead," said Clarence. "She drowned more than a year ago."

"Really?" said Mr Burgess, peering again at the documents in front of him. "Well, either she's been siphoning money from beyond the grave or..."

"Or what?"

"Or you are, to put it bluntly, the victim of grand fraud."

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**Ken Wilson** is an ELT author and trainer and has worked in English language teaching for more than forty years. He's written more than thirty ELT titles, including a dozen series of course books, and also writes radio and TV programmes, sketches, songs and drama resources.

His first ELT publication was an album of songs called *Mister Monday*, released when he was 23, which at the time made him the youngest published ELT author ever. Since then, he has written and recorded more than two hundred songs for English learners.

Until 2002, Ken was artistic director of the English Teaching Theatre, a company which performed stage-shows for learners of English all over the world. The ETT made more than 250 tours to 55 countries on five continents.

Two years ago, Ken decided to embark on a Masters in Creative Writing at Birkbeck College London and is currently writing his dissertation, the first fifteen thousand words of a novel called *The Duke's Portrait*. The story is set in the 1930s, mainly in a large house in the English countryside.



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